

To: Scott Smith[ssmith@waterdefense.org]
From: Durno, Mark
Sent: Tue 8/23/2016 8:14:44 PM
Subject: RE: For the Record: Water Defense Response to New York Times Magazine Article

Thanks for sharing. Talk tomorrow.

Mark Durno

Homeland Security Advisor / Deputy Chief

Emergency Response Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
25063 Center Ridge Road
Westlake, OH 44145

440-250-1743

From: Scott Smith [mailto:ssmith@waterdefense.org]
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 3:26 PM
To: Scott Smith <ssmith@waterdefense.org>
Subject: For the Record: Water Defense Response to New York Times Magazine Article
Importance: High

Below is the text of a link to the Water Defense Flint Information Site. Link is here:
<https://flintwaterdefenseinfo.org>

FOR THE RECORD:

In a recent article published in the New York Times Magazine profiling Mark Edwards, a researcher from Virginia Tech who has been centrally involved the Flint water crisis, Water Defense and our work in Flint is referenced. We were very pleased to see that the on-going crisis is getting the attention that it deserves, but disappointed by how some of our work was portrayed. Water Defense is proud of the role that we have played in Flint. True to our mission, we came into that community at the request of residents, mainly mothers, who were

suspicious of government officials whose actions to date had been, at best, grossly negligent. We came at that time to provide independent, scientifically-validated water testing. Unfortunately, the Times piece contains various allegations or insinuations questioning the validity of our work, but go unanswered. Fortunately, we do have comprehensive responses to those erroneous and unfair charges, which have been posted [here](#) on our Flint Webpage since several weeks before the article's publication.

Particularly in light of the availability of our responses, we regret that Mr. Edwards continues to take exception to our work in Flint. He has accused us of inciting unwarranted fears among Flint residents, even to the point where he claims residents are neglecting their personal hygiene. We stand behind our conclusion, informed by our team of scientific advisors, that data we have collected warrants concern and further investigation. Moreover, we have never suggested or implied that our concerns outweigh the dangers of not bathing. Nor have we ever heard or met with any resident who has interpreted our findings in such an extreme manner. To the contrary, the residents with whom we meet take offense at the suggestion that they would neglect to ensure that they and their families would observe proper personal hygiene.

Our efforts in Flint have been directed towards goals that we share with Mr. Edwards. Early on, we reached out in an effort to work with him cooperatively for the benefit of the Flint community, rather than at cross purposes.

Our Chief Technology Officer & Investigator, Scott Smith, in conjunction with the Local Plumbers' Union and residents tested 20 homes. Our testing was comprehensive. We tested water as it enters a home, at the water heater, and in showers and bathtubs. From January to August of 2016, Scott has spent time on the ground and in the homes of Flint residents listening and responding to the needs of the community.

As the article indicates, Water Defense does use a new form of water-sampling for exposure over time called the Waterbug, but it is

important to note that we consistently use this technology in concert with traditional grab sampling. Because the Waterbug methodology is under on-going review and development in concert with our scientific advisors, our [laboratory reports](#) verify that we never rely on Waterbug sampling exclusively. Moreover, as we have previously said, the Waterbug is not for sale, nor is Scott Smith, or Water Defense marketing the Waterbug for use in Flint or anywhere else. For more information, please visit our information [page on the WaterBug](#).

We were dismayed by the article's suggestion that the blue water found in Lulu Brezzell's home could have been analyzed based solely on a visual comparison to bottled water. Ms. Brezzell deserves to have her home tested for copper and any other potential chemicals of concern, which is what Water Defense did when we visited her home earlier this year and again this month and took water samples using both the Waterbug and grab sampling methodology.

Water Defense takes pride in operating in a transparent and ethical manner, and therefore we have publicly provided all of our unadulterated [laboratory reports](#), including the report of samples collected from the [Brezzell residence](#). To our knowledge, at this time, no other organization or agency has provided these kind of reports nor operated in a similarly transparent manner.

The fact remains that many Flint residents – including Ms. Brezzell and her family – continue to suffer from health issues. This family and many other families in Flint are anxious and are experiencing very real health concerns. We do not downplay those concerns; we do not attempt to placate their fears with narrow assurances. What we do is continue to look for answers.

The still developing story of what went wrong in Flint and what it means for the long-term health and well-being of its residents – and potentially those in other American communities – is far too important to be overshadowed by disputes among scientists and advocates working in specific ways to help that community. We hope that our carefully prepared and vetted answers to the questions raised in the article will allow us all to move past this distraction so that we can

continue in our collective efforts to ensure that all Americans realize their right to clean, safe drinking water.

Best Regards,

Scott Smith

Chief Technology Officer & Investigator

Water Defense

Twitter @WaterWarriorOne

(508) 345-6520